

Coronary Artery Bypass Graft

Coronary artery bypass surgery, also referred to by its initials as “CABG,” is a common surgical procedure used to correct severe blockages of arteries in the heart (coronary artery disease). In coronary artery disease, the blood vessels that nourish the heart muscle become narrowed or completely blocked, causing the amount of blood flow through them to decrease. The purpose of coronary artery bypass graft surgery is to improve the blood supply to an area of the heart that has been deprived of adequate circulation. Veins from other parts of the body are grafted onto the diseased coronary artery above and below the blockage. This graft restores blood circulation to the damaged area.

Coronary artery bypass surgery is actually two surgeries performed at the same time. One incision is made in the leg to remove a vein. This vein is used as a graft, or conduit, to create a new coronary artery. Another incision is made in the chest to allow the surgeon to reach the heart. The length and number of incisions depend on how many bypasses are needed.

One end of the vein graft is sewn in the side of the aorta, the large artery of the heart. The other end of the graft is sewn below the area of the blocked coronary artery. This vein actually detours, or “bypasses,” the blood around the obstruction to restore good blood flow to the area. The graft is usually taken from the saphenous vein in the leg, an internal mammary vein or a radial artery. The two veins are typically used because they are long enough. Since the legs and arms have numerous other blood vessels, these veins are not missed and circulation is still good after surgery. Coronary artery bypass surgery generally takes from 3 to 6 hours, depending on how many bypasses are needed.

Studies indicate that a hospital that performs more than 100 CABG surgeries per year may provide better quality of care. According to the American College of Cardiology / American Heart Association Task Force Subcommittee on Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Surgery, a recommended yearly minimum of 200 to 300 operations should be performed by hospitals caring for patients with heart disease, and 100 to 150 minimum per surgeon; Health Canada recommends 150, and a London, England independent report recommends a workload of 200 to 250.

[See page 20 for references, numbers 1, 5, 7, 35 and 39.]

Region	Subregion	Average Annual Volume
	Hospital	
Central / Northeastern Region		
Columbia		
	Boone Hospital Center	378
	Columbia Regional Hospital	5
	University Hospitals and Clinics	352
Jefferson City		
	Capital Region Medical Center	155
	St. Mary's Health Center	213
Rest of Area		
	Lake Regional Health System	82
Kansas City / Western Region		
Clay / Platte Counties		
	North Kansas City Hospital	228
Eastern Jackson County		
	Independence Regional Health Center	151
Kansas City (Jackson County)		
	Baptist Medical Center	108
	Research Medical Center	300
	Saint Joseph Health Center	220
	Saint Luke's Hospital	779
Rest of Area		
	Heartland Regional Medical Center	228
Southeastern Region		
Cape Girardeau		
	Saint Francis Medical Center	274
	Southeast Missouri Hospital	360

Region	Average
Subregion	Annual
Hospital	Volume
Southwestern Region	
Joplin	
Freeman Health System	290
St. John's Regional Medical Center Joplin	396
Springfield	
Lester E. Cox Medical Center South	483
St. John's Regional Health Center	856
St Louis / Eastern Region	
St. Charles County	
SSM St. Joseph Health Center	225
St. Louis City / County	
Barnes-Jewish Hospital	621
Christian Hospital Northeast-Northwest	521
Depaul Health Center	246
Des Peres Hospital	142
Forest Park Hospital	99
Missouri Baptist Medical Center	658
Saint Louis University Hospital	225
SSM St. Joseph Hospital of Kirkwood	147
SSM St. Mary's Health Center	215
St. Anthony's Medical Center	493
St. John's Mercy Medical Center	533
St. Luke's Hospital	509
Rest of Area	
Jefferson Memorial Hospital	69



Procedure-Specific Questions

- ◆ What are the risks involved with having a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft?
- ◆ Will I have to change my physical activity after my surgery?
- ◆ Will it be okay to engage in sexual intercourse after my surgery?

(See page 3 for other questions)